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NOTICES FROM THE LICK OBSERVATORY.*

PREPARED BY MEMBERS OF THE STAFF.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF DONATI'S COMET IN SEPTEMBER, 1858.

A letter from Professor G. P. BOND to Mr. R. C. CARRINGTON, dated April 4, 1859, states that a photograph of DONATI'S comet was obtained at the Harvard College Observatory on September 28, 1858. The exposure was 6^m, and the plate showed the nucleus and a little nebulosity, fifteen seconds in diameter. (*Annals* H. C. O., Vol. III, p. 210.) In his reply of May 26th, Mr. CARRINGTON sends another photograph of the comet to BOND, taken on September 27th by ? ? ? with an exposure of seven seconds, using a camera lens (I infer that it was a portrait lens of some five inches in aperture), which shows much more nebulosity. CARRINGTON'S enclosed photograph is not now to be found, I believe. The photograph was unknown to Dr. DE LA RUE, apparently (see *Monthly Notices*, R. A. S., Vol. XIX, p. 353). Both these photographs—the first ever made of comets — have remained unnoticed by all the historians of astronomical photography, up to this time, so far as I know.

E. S. H.

SEARCH FOR COMET, OR COMETS, REPORTED BY DR. SWIFT, SEPTEMBER 20TH.

On September 21, 1896, a telegram from Dr. SWIFT was received here as follows: "Last night, at sunset, object as bright as *Venus* one degree east of Sun."

That afternoon, with a HERSCHEL prism applied to the twelve-inch telescope, I examined the region immediately about the Sun, and then with a low-power eye-piece, for several degrees on every side of the Sun, without finding the object. As the Sun set, I again searched north, south, and east of it, and the next morning as it arose, north, south, and west of it, without success.

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* Lick Astronomical Department of the University of California.

For several mornings and evenings Mr. PERRINE searched with the comet-seeker the region for many degrees about the Sun.

W. J. HUSSEY.

BRIGHT FIRE-BALL, JANUARY 26, 1897 (MT. HAMILTON).

At 0^h 11^m 44^s A.M., P.S.T., a brilliant fire-ball fell slowly from *Orion*, almost vertically — inclining a little towards the south. It burst into several pieces just before disappearing, but left no persistent train. It presented quite a sensible disc, and was several times as bright as *Venus* at her brightest — lighting up the sky noticeably.

C. D. P.

THE METRIC SYSTEM.

"President KELLOGG submitted the following: A communication urging active measures to secure the adoption of the metric system. Professor GEORGE DAVIDSON asks the signatures of our Regents and Faculty in its favor. Regent HOUGHTON offered the following resolution:

> *Resolved*, That the Board of Regents of the University of California fully indorse and recommend the passage of the bill now before Congress to adopt the metric system of weights and measurements, as provided in H. R. 7251 of 1st Session of 54th Congress." [Adopted April 14, 1896.]—*Report of the Secretary of the University of California, 1895–6.*

ERRATUM IN NO. 53 OF THE *PUBLICATIONS*, A. S. P.

In the *Publications*, Volume VIII, page 328, line — 13, *for* AUWERS *read* AMBRONN, or ANDING.

(A. A.)

HOËNÉ WRONSKI.

Most readers of mathematical astronomy have at some time in their lives met with a paper by VILLARCEAU: *Mécanique Céleste; Exposé des Methodes de WRONSKI.* Attracted by the name of VILLARCEAU, they may have spent more or less time over it; but finally all must have left it, uncertain whether the unknown WRONSKI was "a charlatan, a madman, or a genius." At rare intervals the name of WRONSKI would recur to the